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**ASSIGNMENT BOOKLET 5A**

ELA3105 English Language Arts 30-1
Module 5: Section 1 Assignment and Section 2 Assignment

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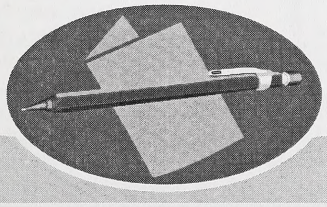
# English Language Arts 30-1

## Module 5

## A Study in Drama

### Assignment Booklet 5A



Learning Technologies Branch

Alberta LEARNING

## FOR TEACHER'S USE ONLY

### Summary

| | Total Possible Marks | Your Mark |
|---|---|---|
| Section 1 Assignment | 30 | |
| Section 2 Assignment | 30 | |
| | 60 | |

### Teacher's Comments

English Language Arts 30-1
Module 5: A Study in Drama
Assignment Booklet 5A
Section 1 Assignment and Section 2 Assignment
Learning Technologies Branch
ISBN 0-7741-2522-5

**The Learning Technologies Branch acknowledges with appreciation the Alberta Distance Learning Centre and Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7 for their review of this Assignment Booklet.**

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|---|---|
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| Teachers | ✓ |
| Administrators | |
| Home Instructors | |
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# ASSIGNMENT BOOKLET 5A
# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 30-1: MODULE 5
# SECTION 1 ASSIGNMENT AND SECTION 2 ASSIGNMENT

Your mark for this module will be determined in part by how well you do your assignments.

This Assignment Booklet is worth 60 marks out of the total 165 marks for the assignments in Module 5. The value of each assignment and each question is stated in the left margin.

Work slowly and carefully. If you have difficulty, go back and review the appropriate topic.

You are encouraged to use a computer and word-processing application for many of these questions. If you use a computer, be sure that you submit a printed copy that has been carefully proofread. Include your name, course name, and assignment question number on each page. Alternatively, you may be able to arrange with your teacher to submit your written assignments by e-mail.

Be sure to proofread your answers carefully.

30

## Section 1 Assignment: Reading the Play—Act 1

**Read all parts of your assignment carefully and record your answers in the appropriate places.**

**1.** In Lesson 4, you were given a number of questions to act as guides as you worked through the latter part of Act 1 of *Death of a Salesman*. Following are five of those questions (though some have been rephrased). Write out brief responses based on what you've read in Act 1.

2

**a.** At one point in Act 1, Happy offers to finance Willy's retirement. Willy scorns Happy's offer. Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2) **b.** When he's with Charley, Willy frequently insults him. Why would he do this to the man who is, presumably, his best friend?

(2) **c.** To Willy, Ben is a symbol of success. Explain why.

(4) **d.** Charley and Ben reveal very different attitudes toward the Loman boys' stealing. How do their attitudes differ? In your response, explain which of the two men you think is being more realistic and give your reasons.

(10)

**e.** The main character in *Death of a Salesman* is Willy Loman, but the other principal characters are interesting people as well. Now that you've read Act 1 of *Death of a Salesman*, it's likely that you've found one of the important characters other than Willy to be particularly interesting. Perhaps you sympathize more with this character's conflicts or understand his or her viewpoint better than that of the other characters.

Based on what you've learned up to this point in the play, write a brief character sketch of your chosen principal character—any important character other than Willy himself. In all likelihood, you've done character sketches in previous English language arts courses. A character sketch, remember, should discuss factors such as the person's

- personality traits
- struggles and conflicts
- values and motivation
- strengths and weaknesses

But a good character sketch should dig a bit deeper than this. For instance, if Linda Loman interests you, you might ask questions like these:

- Does Linda understand Willy?
- Is there depth to her character, or is she the soft and submissive wife and mother she sometimes appears?
- Does she have a realistic view of her sons?
- Is she just when she says that her sons have treated their father the same way the Wagner company did?

Finally, remember that when writing a character sketch you should always provide evidence and reasons to back up your points.

| **Assessment Criteria 10 marks** | |
|---|---|
| • The response shows a thoughtful assessment of the character's personality up to this point in the play. | 4 marks |
| • Evidence and explanations are provided in defence of assertions. | 4 marks |
| • There is clear evidence of effective editing. | 2 marks |

(There is more room for your response on the next page.)

(There is more room for your response on the next page.)

**2.** Following are ten short excerpts from Act 1 of *Death of a Salesman*. In a sentence or two, explain the underlying meaning an active reader (or viewer or listener) can infer from each one—what it reveals about the characters and situation.

(1) **a.** In a conversation with Linda, Willy makes these three statements:

> The trouble is he's lazy . . . .
>
> Biff is a lazy bum!
>
> Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world a young man with such—personal attractiveness, gets lost. And such a hard worker. There's one thing about Biff—he's not lazy.[1]

(1) **b.** When Biff and Happy are talking about Biff's plan to try for a job with a previous employer, this exchange takes place:

> BIFF: No, but when I quit he said something to me. He put his arm on my shoulder, and he said, "Biff, if you ever need anything, come to me."
>
> HAPPY: I remember that. That sounds good.
>
> BIFF: I think I'll go to see him. If I could get ten thousand or even seven or eight thousand dollars I could buy a beautiful ranch.
>
> HAPPY: I bet he'd back you. 'Cause he thought highly of you, Biff. I mean, they all do. You're well liked, Biff. That's why I say to come back here, and we both have the apartment. And I'm tellin' you, Biff, any babe you want . . .
>
> BIFF: No, with a ranch I could do the work I like and still be something. I just wonder though. I wonder if Oliver still thinks I stole that carton of basketballs.

[1] From DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Arthur Miller, copyright 1949, renewed (c) 1977 by Arthur Miller. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

HAPPY: Oh, he probably forgot that long ago. It's almost ten years. You're too sensitive. Anyway, he didn't really fire you.

BIFF: Well, I think he was going to.[1]

1

c. This conversation takes place between Biff, Willy, and Happy. They're discussing a football that Biff took from school to practise with.

BIFF: Well, I borrowed it from the locker room. *He laughs confidentially.*

WILLY, *laughing with him at the theft*: I want you to return that.

HAPPY: I told you he wouldn't like it!

BIFF, *angrily*: Well, I'm bringing it back!

WILLY, *stopping the incipient argument, to Happy*: Sure, he's gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn't he? *To Biff*: Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative![2]

2

[1] From DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Arthur Miller, copyright 1949, renewed (c) 1977 by Arthur Miller. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.
[2] Ibid.

1

**d.** When Linda asks Willy if he'd sold much on a recent sales trip, this exchange takes place:

WILLY: I did five hundred gross in Providence and seven hundred gross in Boston.

LINDA: No! Wait a minute, I've got a pencil. *She pulls pencil and paper out of her apron pocket.* That makes your commission . . . Two hundred—my God! Two hundred and twelve dollars!

WILLY: Well, I didn't figure it yet, but . . .

LINDA: How much did you do?

WILLY: Well, I—I did—about a hundred and eighty gross in Providence. Well, no—it came to—roughly two hundred gross on the whole trip.[1]

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(1) **e.** Willy has this conversation with his brother Ben (whom he believes to be in the room) and Charley (who's wearing golfing knickers). It concerns the fact that Biff and Happy have been stealing lumber from a construction sight.

WILLY: I gave them hell, understand. But I got a couple of fearless characters there.

CHARLEY: Willy, the jails are full of fearless characters.

BEN, *clapping Willy on the back, with a laugh at Charley*: And the stock exchange, friend!

WILLY, *joining in Ben's laughter*: Where are the rest of your pants?

CHARLEY: My wife bought them.

WILLY: Now all you need is a golf club and you can go upstairs and go to sleep. *To Ben*: Great athlete! Between him and his son Bernard they can't hammer a nail! [1]

(1) **f.** In a conversation between Biff and Linda, these two exchanges take place:

BIFF: He threw me out of this house, remember that.

LINDA: WHY did he do that? I never knew why.

BIFF: Because I know he's a fake and he doesn't like anybody around who knows!

LINDA: Why a fake? In what way? What do you mean?

BIFF: Just don't lay it all at my feet. It's between me and him—that's all I have to say. [2]

**and**

LINDA: It seems there's a woman . . . *She takes a breath as*

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[2] Ibid.

BIFF, *sharply but contained*: What woman?

LINDA, *simultaneously*: . . . and this woman . . .

LINDA: What?

BIFF: Nothing. Go ahead.

LINDA: What did you say?

BIFF: Nothing. I just said what woman?[1]

1 **g.** This conversation takes place at one point between Linda and her sons:

HAPPY: You don't raise a guy to a responsible job who whistles in the elevator!

LINDA: Well, don't argue about it now.

HAPPY: Like when you'd go off and swim in the middle of the day instead of taking the line around.

BIFF, *his resentment rising*: Well, don't you run off? You take off sometimes, don't you? On a nice summer day?

HAPPY: Yeah, but I cover myself!

LINDA: Boys!

HAPPY: If I'm going to take a fade the boss can call any number where I'm supposed to be and they'll swear to him that I just left. I'll tell you something that I hate to say, Biff, but in the business world some of them think you're crazy.

[1] From DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Arthur Miller, copyright 1949, renewed (c) 1977 by Arthur Miller. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

BIFF, *angered*: Screw the business world!

HAPPY: All right, screw it! Great, but cover yourself!

[1]

1

**h.** In private, after the big family discussion about seeing Bill Oliver the next day, Willy and Linda have this exchange:

LINDA: I'm just wondering if Oliver will remember him. You think he might?

WILLY, *coming out of the bathroom in his pajamas*: Remember him? What's the matter with you, you crazy? If he'd've stayed with Oliver he'd be on top by now! Wait'll Oliver gets a look at him. You don't know the average caliber any more. The average young man today—*he is getting into bed*—is got a caliber of zero. Greatest thing in the world for him was to bum around.

[2]

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[2] Ibid.

(1) **i.** Reminiscing about Biff's great day of high school football glory, Willy says:

> Like a young god. Hercules—something like that. And the sun, the sun all around him. Remember how he waved to me? Right up from the field, with the representatives of three colleges standing by? And the buyers I brought, and the cheers when he came out—Loman, Loman, Loman! God Almighty, he'll be great yet. A star like that, magnificent, can never really fade away![1]

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(1) **j.** At one point Happy says this to his brother:

> That's what I dream about, Biff. Sometimes I want to just rip my clothes off in the middle of the store and outbox that goddam merchandise manager. I mean I can outbox, outrun, and outlift anybody in that store, and I have to take orders from those common, petty sons-of-bitches till I can't stand it any more.[2]

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**When you've finished responding to the preceding questions, return to page 31 of the Module 5 Student Module Booklet and continue working where you left off.**

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[2] Ibid.

30

## Section 2 Assignment: Reading the Play—Act 2 and Requiem

**Read all parts of your assignment carefully and record your answers in the appropriate places.**

**1.** Respond to the following questions with a short answer of a paragraph or two for each. These questions may refer to any parts of the play—Act 1, Act 2, or the Requiem. Be sure to defend your ideas with specific references.

3

**a.** One character referred to in *Death of a Salesman* but who never actually appears is an old salesman whom Willy once knew—Dave Singleman. Willy refers to Singleman in a lengthy speech in the scene in which he asks Howard for a job in New York (near the beginning of Act 2).

Reread this passage now; then explain the role that Dave Singleman plays in Willy's life and in the play.

(There is more room for your response on the next page.)

**b.** Happy abandons his father in the restaurant scene when Willy becomes an embarrassment and gets in the way of his son's night on the town.

3 **(1)** Is Happy's public denial of his father at all justified in the way in which Willy has treated his son throughout his life?

3

**(2)** Is there a connection between Happy's rejection of Willy and Happy's periodic insistence that he's losing weight and will soon get married? Explain your ideas with references to the play.

3

**c.** To what extent, if any, is Linda Loman responsible for Willy's failure and suicide? Be sure to make specific references to the play.

(There is more room for your response on the next page.)

6

**2.** Select **one** speech from *Death of a Salesman* that you think is particularly significant (but not one that has already been quoted in this Assignment Booklet). Perhaps it reveals something important about a character; perhaps it moves the plot along in a significant way; perhaps it tells the audience something important about the past interactions of the Loman family—or perhaps it does something else that you feel is significant. Quote the speech (or the most important part of it) and explain its significance in the play.

(There is more room for your response on the next page.)

**3.** Now that you've finished reading *Death of a Salesman*, think about the play and your experience of coming to know it. Then respond to the following questions in a sentence or two for each.

(2) **a.** What aspects of the play appeal to you the most?

(2) **b.** What aspects appeal to you the least?

(2) **c.** Did you find reading the play challenging? Identify the aspects you found most difficult.

2

**d.** **(1)** What strategies did you use while reading *Death of a Salesman* to deal with the challenging aspects of the play? (If it helps, refer again to the opening pages of Section 1: Lesson 1.)

2

**(2)** How well did those strategies work for you? Would you change any if confronted with another play presenting similar challenges?

(2) **e.** If you were talking with other students about to read *Death of a Salesman*, what advice would you give them?

_____

_____

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**When you've finished responding to the preceding questions, submit this Assignment Booklet for assessment. Then return to page 53 of the Module 5 Student Module Booklet and continue working where you left off.**

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